

Montpelier-Roxbury Act 46 Study Committee



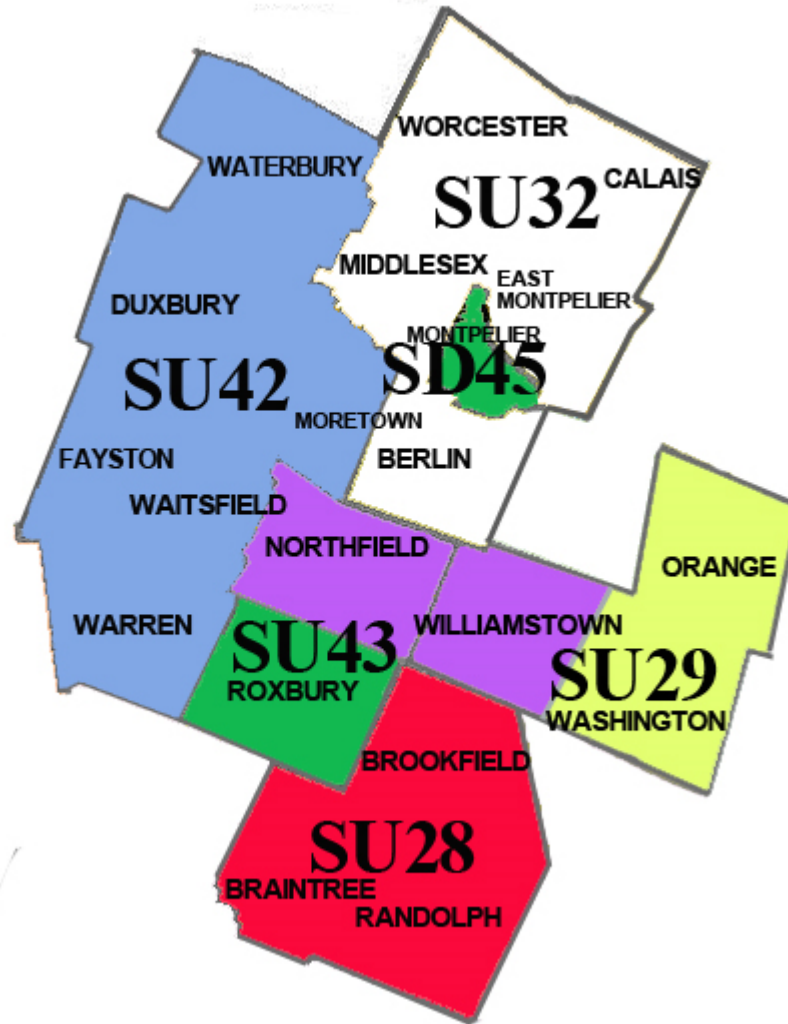
State Board of Education

May 16, 2017

Agenda

- Context
- Highlights of the Proposal
- Questions and Answers

The Proposed Montpelier-Roxbury District



Two Communities - Two Realities

Roxbury: *Population 691 : 86.5 Students*

- Small, rural
- Operates PK-6 in one building
- Tuitions 7-12, no similar configuration nearby
- Part of Washington South Supervisory Union which will dissolve

Montpelier: *Population 7855 : 1036.32 Students*

- Relatively cosmopolitan
- Operates PK-12 in three buildings
- Its own Supervisory District

The Schools of Montpelier and Roxbury



Why this study?

- Roxbury's growing, out-of-control tax rate, and challenges in maintaining free-standing elementary education.
- Roxbury's need for a stable, consistent partner and its desire for a merger with Montpelier.
- Montpelier's unused capacity to serve more students.
- Tax rate benefits—large for Roxbury, small for Montpelier.
- The ability to improve education for Roxbury students.
- The opportunity for Montpelier to play an active role in addressing the goals of Act 46.
- No impact on ability to consider other mergers.

The study committee

- 2 school board members from Roxbury, 3 school board members from Montpelier, 2 public members from Montpelier
- Consultant Stephen Dale
- 10 meetings, December 2016 – May 2017
- Public input opportunities at all study committee meetings
- 1 public input meeting in each community

The Plan

- PK-4 Elementary education in both communities.
- Grades 5-8 Main Street Middle School
- Grades 9-12 Montpelier High School
- FY'19-FY'22 Grandfathering of current Roxbury students in grades 7-10 as of May 1, 2017.

Community Engagement

- Public forum in Roxbury March 13, 2017
- Public forum in Montpelier March 21, 2017
- Alternated study committee meetings between Roxbury and Montpelier
- Comments from the public at many committee meetings

Questions Raised from Roxbury Forum

- Would current tuitioned students be able to continue? Yes.
- How much of a vote would Roxbury have on the board? 2 votes out of 16 votes.
- Opportunities for kids who want a Voc. Ed. program? Yes, the new district would provide transportation from MHS
- Do we assume Montpelier's debt? Yes. Payment on the debt is part of Montpelier's budget and hence built into the model.

Questions Raised from Montpelier Forum

- What is busing time for kids from Roxbury? WSSU business manager estimated 1 hour.
- Any kids from Roxbury in Montpelier schools now? No, it is easier for them to start in Middle School at U-32; tradition of families going to U-32
- Could only 11th and 12th graders be “grandfathered?” No, not acceptable to Roxbury. Compromise was not to “grandfather” current sixth graders who will be starting at a new school Sept. 2017.
- What if enrollment drops at Roxbury Village School? New board would have to grapple with that; good chance that enrollment could increase.

Potential Challenges Discussed

- Providing food service in Roxbury
- Developing effective transportation plan for Roxbury
- Determining snow days
- Integrating 5th graders from two communities into Main Street Middle School
- Encouraging cross community involvement in schools.
- Understanding the “small school culture” by Montpelier administrators

Achieving the Goals of Act 46: Educational

- Greater diversity—rural and urban, socio-economic.
- Stability and equity for Roxbury students.
- Stabilizes Roxbury Village School as part of larger district. (Act 46)
- Broader/deeper middle school experience for Roxbury students.
- Ability for Roxbury students to remain together after elementary grades.
- Provides public school transportation for Roxbury students, grades 7-12.
- Increases student numbers in Montpelier—potential for more course offerings in Montpelier, course stability/justification.
- Provision for “grandfathering” some Roxbury students to assure continuity.

Achieving the Goals of Act 46: Financial

- Greater efficiencies—use of underutilized capacity in Montpelier.
- Lower expenditures for range of support services.
- Direct financial benefits for taxpayers—incentives.
- Greater tax rate stability for taxpayers.
- Reduced demand on Education Fund, \$542,000 annually by FY'23.

Achieving the Goals of Act 46: Transparency/Accountability

The district is of a size and scope to come into being as a Supervisory District with a single board, a single superintendent, and a single budget.

Highlights of Articles

- Agreement on grades to be provided.
- Agreement on providing school district transportation for all students, including an “activities bus.”
- Board make-up proportional—
 - 9 members
 - 7 Montpelier (2 votes each)
 - 2 Roxbury (1 vote each)

From a Montpelier mother who lived in Roxbury with her sons up until 3 years ago. . .

“Roxbury is filled with very committed and loving parents who put in a lot of extra time and energy to help make their children’s education a better experience. . . the creative, innovative and determined minds of Roxbury would be an asset to the Montpelier community in many ways. . .

I also think that, although Montpelier is lucky to be in such position to make choices around this, not everyone is so blessed. This Act 46 is a huge challenge for a little place like Roxbury, who have children who equally deserve access to high quality education. . .

I feel, as a privileged citizen of Montpelier, that we have a duty to not only consider our own local children (who this merger would benefit) but also the well-being of children who are in a less advantaged position . . .

It takes a village (or a county!).”